**DC VICTIM ASSISTANCE NETWORK (VAN)**

*Friday, June 14, 2013*

**MINUTES**

**Appriss/VINE and DC Department of Corrections**

* **OVS** facilitated a presentation by Appriss, the company with whom the DC Department of Corrections contracts to provide VINEWatch and VINELink.
* **VINE** is a service provided by DC DOC to the public, which enables the public to register against an offender who is incarcerated in DC DOC facilities. Once registered, the VINE system will provide automatic notification to whoever is registered that the offender has been released. The VINE system has been in the District since 2003.
* **Appriss** demonstratd the difference between **VINELink and VINEWatch. VINELink** is available for anyone by calling **877.329.7894** or by the website[**www.vinelink.com**](http://www.vinelink.com)**.** Anyone interested can register through either phone or website for phone and/or email notifications against any offender incarcerated in the DC DOC. Once an offender is transferred to the Bureau of Prisons, the registration will not transfer. Victims have to register again by contacting the victim/witness staff at the Bureau of Prisons, and only victims who are identified by the Bureau of Prisons as an “authorized” victim and are assigned a victim/witness coordinator. Unclear how a victim becomes an “authorized” victim for this purpose. This was identified as a gap for DC and **Melissa Hook** promised to look into the issue.
* **VINE Watch** is a system designed only for authorized users. The system was built for use by victim advocates and allows them to run reports, as well as register their clients. DOC approves the users. Advocates who are interested in obtaining VINEWatch access should contact **Darby Baham** (information provided).
* Discussed the utility of VINE for criminal justice professionals and service providers. Many police officers, advocates, and prosecutors have found it useful to register against certain offender for personal safety reasons or to be able to notify their clients when a particular offender is released. Advocates who are currently using **VINELink** discussed some of its utility. The system is currently not in use for pre-trial as most offenders are not held pre-trial. Pre-trial holds are only in the case of probation violation or serious felony. Additionally, the expected release date of an offender is only available by phone.
* Advocates also discussed the fact that many clients are disconnected from the internet, email, and do not have a telephone (particularly victims of intimate partner violence).
* Using **VINELink** there is a customer service representative, trained in communicating with traumatized crime victims, answering the phone 24/7/365. Information is available in over 190 languages using a language link connection. However, there is always bilingual access via a live operator.
* **Erin Dunagan** and **Darby Baham** provided statistics on the usage of DC VINELink: there have been 3,260 new registrations, over 62,000 notification calls, and over 6,000 notification emails.
* **Erin Dunagan** and **Darby Baham** encouraged people to put the VINELink link on individual agency websites. **Elizabeth Krauss** will work to put the link on DC OVS’ website.
* Discussion of the link to DC local resources. Needs to be updated. **Elizabeth Krauss** of OVS will take the lead on ensuring that the list of DC local resources is current.
* There is a **VINEMobile SmartPhone** application available for download through iTunes, the Android Marketplace, and BlackBerry. There are no push notifications available yet, but they are working on production of that capability.
* **Appriss** and **DC DOC** suggested a training week during which many different sessions of 3 hour trainings would be held for victim service providers for the purpose of training them on the various usages of VINE. **Appriss** and **DC DOC** will coordinate that with **DC OVS**.

**Discussion of VAN Structure and VAN Charter**

* **Cortney Fisher** presented the final draft of the Charter that was developed by the VAN Charter Development Committee. Members of the VAN Charter Development Committee were identified as: **Jaime Farrant** of Ayuda**, Michelle Palmer** of the Wendt Center**, Tonya Turner** of Break the Cycle**, Nikki Charles** of NVRDC**, and Bobbi Mason** of DASH.
* **Cortney Fisher** announced that a 5 day period for notice and comment on the VAN Charter would be implemented from **Monday, June 17 through Friday, June 21**. All VAN members will receive an electronic copy of the Charter so that they can provide electronic feedback.
* Suggestions for revisions to the Charter identified during the meeting included:
  + Making room for coalitions to serve on the Leadership Council without competing with membership agencies;
  + Allowing campus representatives to serve both on the VAN and on the Leadership Council;
  + Revising the structure of the Leadership Council so as to ensure that there are sufficient people on the Leadership Council, but not too many;
  + Making room for prevention and outreach specific organizations to serve on the VAN and the Leadership Council.

**New Announcements**

* **Melissa Hook** announced OVS’ new initiative with the **military. The military** is in the process of approving MOUs between the **Network for Victim Recovery, DC FNE, Washington Hospital Center, and DC OVS** to provide crisis response for sexual assault victims stationed at the **Marine Barracks Washington, DC** and **Joint Base Bolling Anacostia.**
* **Melissa Hook** also announced a dedicated prevention initiative at the **Marine Barracks Washington DC** that has been a collaboration between the Command of the **Marine Barracks**, **Anne Seymour**, **OVS**, **Network for Victim Recovery, DC FNE**, and **Men Can Stop Rape**. The purpose is to introduce and train the stationed marines in bystander intervention and to educate the stationed marines on the responses available in DC.
* **Melissa Hoo**k also announced the sexual assault awareness and prevention initiative that is a project between **Men Can Stop Rape** and **DC OVS**. The initiative targets young professionals in Washington, DC, and expands on the work of **UASK DC**. The initiative will continue for a year, with a multi-faceted approach to engaging young professionals. Initiatives with the military are part of the initiative, but there are also scheduled trainings for Capitol Hill interns, Happy Hours, and events at DC United and Nationals games.
* **Natalia Otero** announced a tracking and research project that **SAFE** is spearheading this summer. They are doing a snapshot of their clients for 2 weeks this summer and tracking outcomes over a one year period.

**Adjourned**

***Next meeting scheduled for August 23, 2013 @ 10 am***